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A Fun *Quiz Yourself* Section Included!

Pelé

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Pelé

Pelé

Academic Industries, Inc.
West Haven, Connecticut 06516

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Pelé

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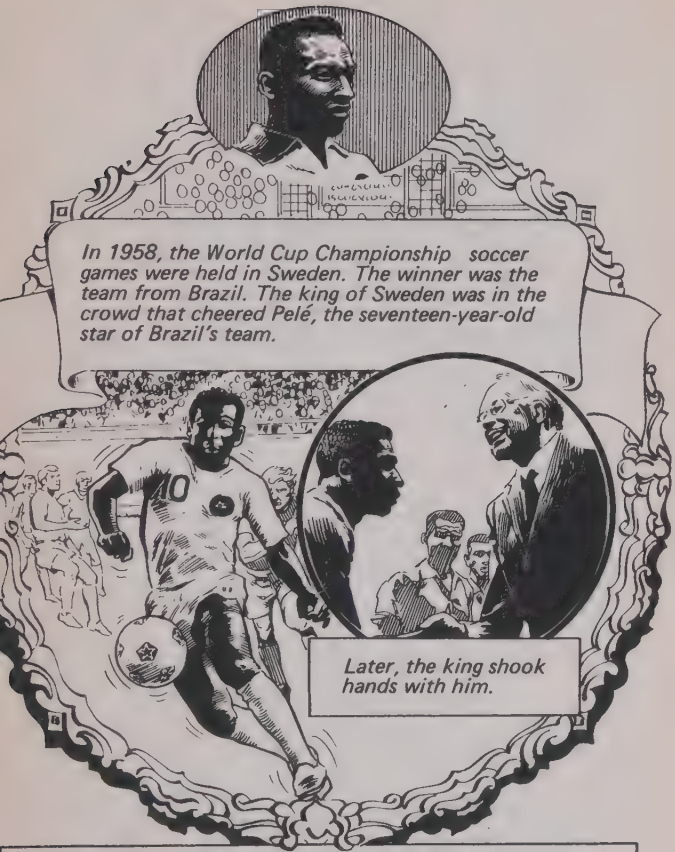


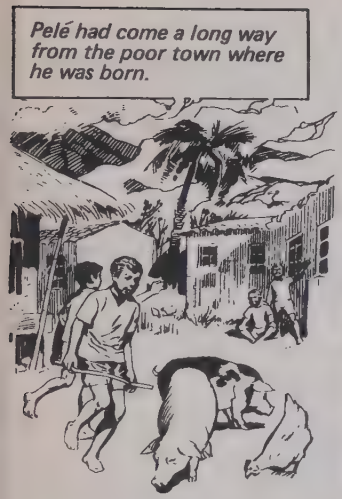
In 1958, the World Cup Championship soccer games were held in Sweden. The winner was the team from Brazil. The king of Sweden was in the crowd that cheered Pelé, the seventeen-year-old star of Brazil's team.

Later, the king shook hands with him.

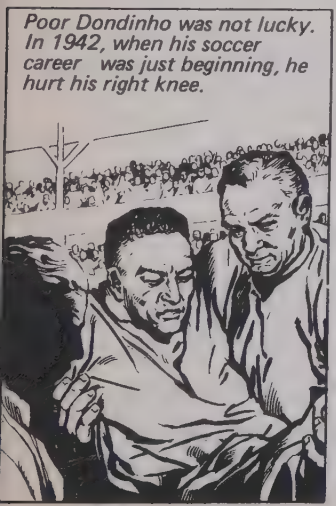
Indeed, the eyes of the world were on Pelé, the boy from a small town in Brazil.

In the United States, soccer is only now becoming known as a great sport. But in the rest of the world, it is known by more people than baseball, basketball, or the game we call football.

The Barefoot Soccer Team


Pelé had come a long way from the poor town where he was born.

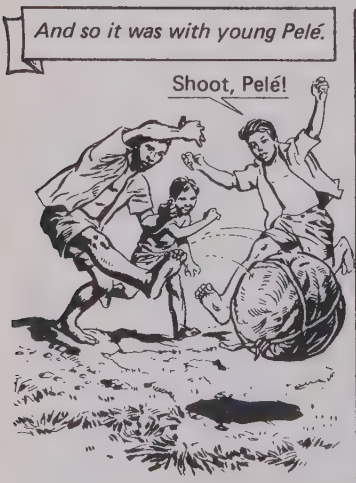
Ah, what strong legs my son has!
One soccer player in the family is enough, Dondinho.


Poor Dondinho was not lucky. In 1942, when his soccer career was just beginning, he hurt his right knee.

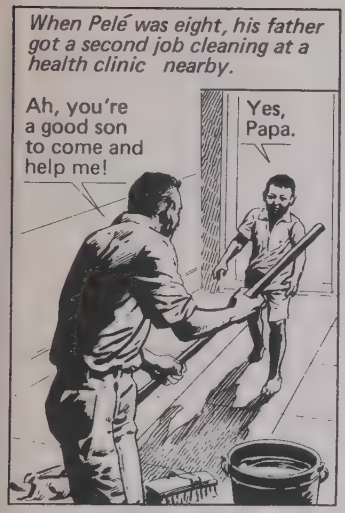
We barely had enough money before. How will we buy our food now?

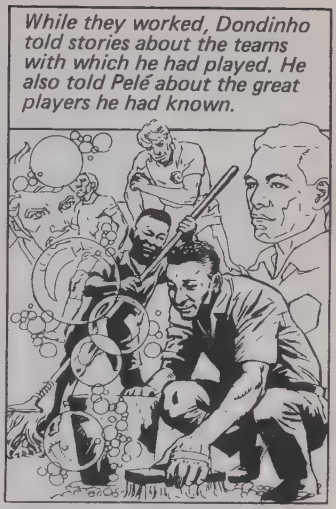
His knee always gave him pain, but Dondinho kept playing soccer. It was the only way he knew to make money for his family.

In Brazil, children learn to kick by the time they can stand. Walking comes later.


And so it was with young Pelé.
Shoot, Pelé!

When Pelé was about seven, his mother let him go to the stadium with his father. While Dondinho earned a little money playing soccer, Pelé earned a little money shining shoes.
Hey, boy! I'm not paying you to watch the game!

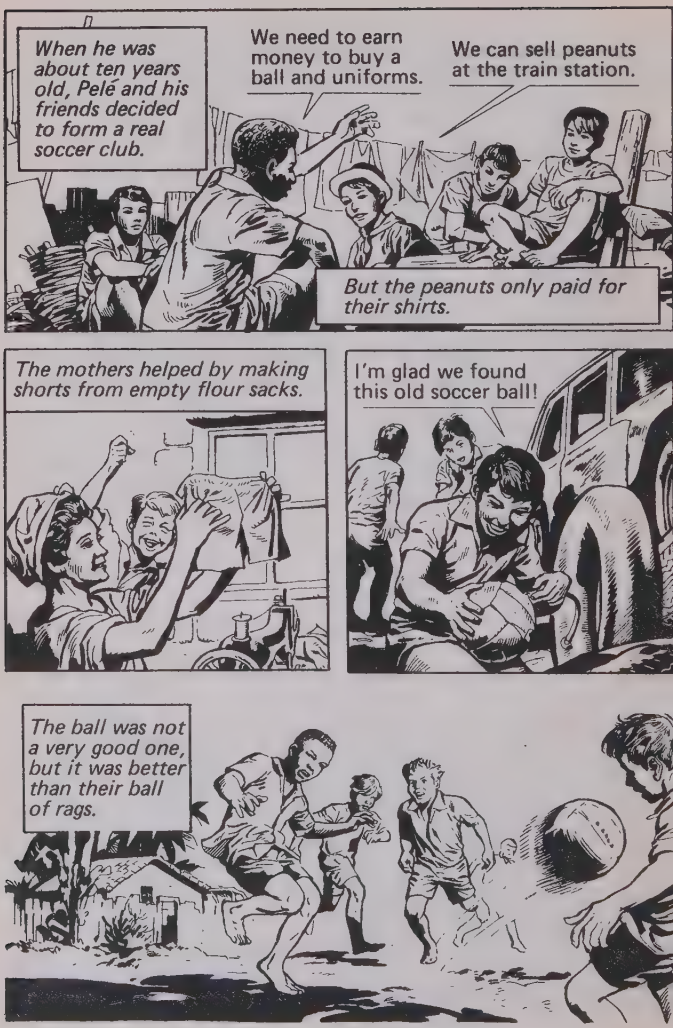

When Pelé was eight, his father got a second job cleaning at a health clinic nearby.
Ah, you're a good son to come and help me!
Yes, Papa.

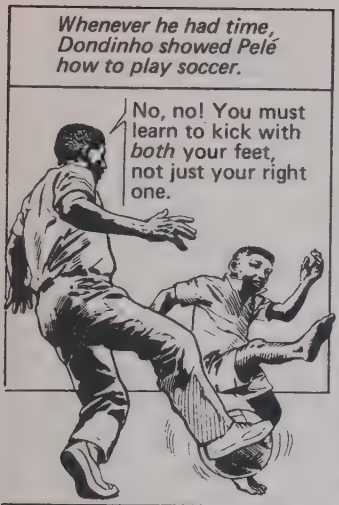

While they worked, Dondinho told stories about the teams with which he had played. He also told Pelé about the great players he had known.

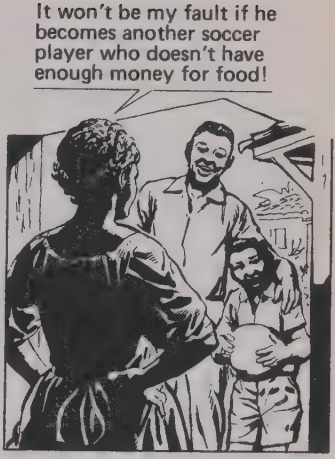
You must go to school soon and learn to read and write.
But, Papa, I must shine shoes.

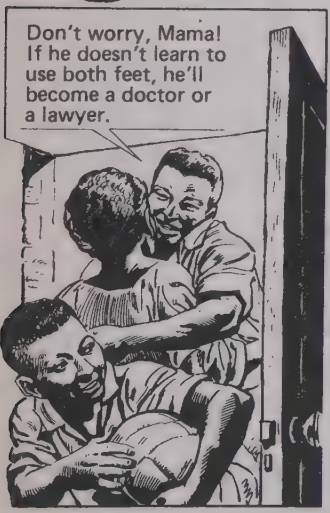
There's time enough for that after school.
But what about soccer?

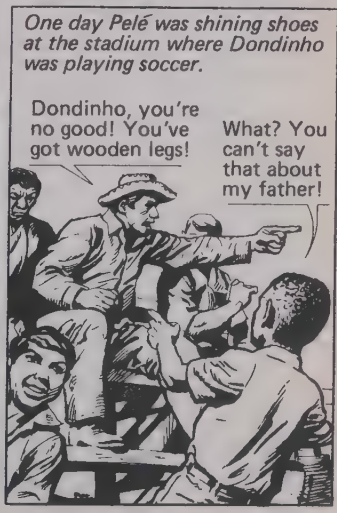
Oh, you can go to school, shine shoes, do your homework, help me at the clinic, and still find time for soccer! After all, you're my son!

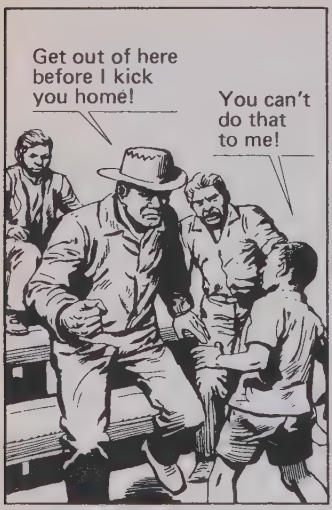

When he was about ten years old, Pelé and his friends decided to form a real soccer club.
We need to earn money to buy a ball and uniforms.
We can sell peanuts at the train station.
But the peanuts only paid for their shirts.
The mothers helped by making shorts from empty flour sacks.
I'm glad we found this old soccer ball!
The ball was not a very good one, but it was better than their ball of rags.

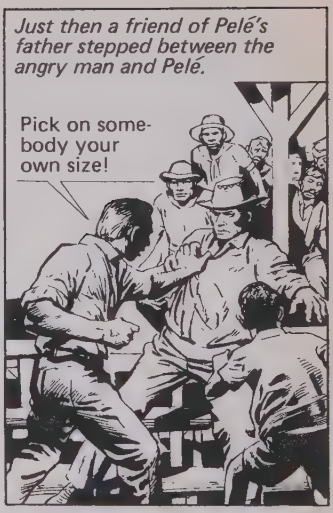

Whenever he had time, Dondinho showed Pelé how to play soccer.
No, no! You must learn to kick with *both* your feet, not just your right one.

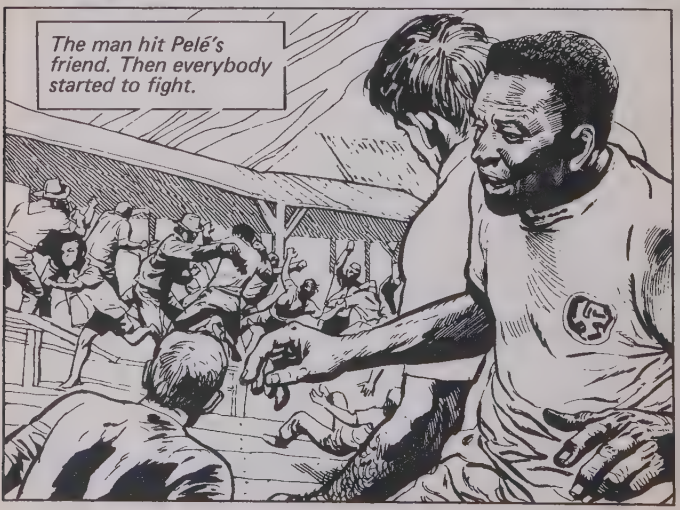

It won't be my fault if he becomes another soccer player who doesn't have enough money for food!


Don't worry, Mama! If he doesn't learn to use both feet, he'll become a doctor or a lawyer.


One day Pelé was shining shoes at the stadium where Dondinho was playing soccer.
Dondinho, you're no good! You've got wooden legs!
What? You can't say that about my father!


Get out of here before I kick you home!
You can't do that to me!


Just then a friend of Pelé's father stepped between the angry man and Pelé.
Pick on somebody your own size!


The man hit Pelé's friend. Then everybody started to fight.

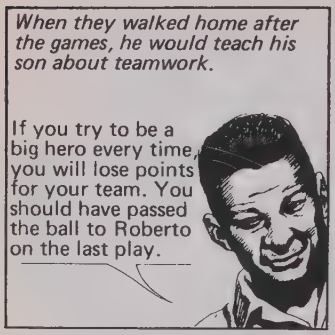
By the time Pelé got home, his father knew the whole story.

If you want to play soccer, you must not get angry.

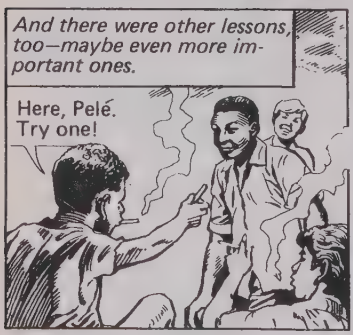
The Chinese say that when a man makes a fist, he has already lost the fight.

Besides, if you get angry on the field, they'll throw you out of the game. That hurts your whole team. So, kick yourself if you want to, but don't start fights with strangers.

Dondinho worked at the clinic and played soccer, but he always found time to watch his son play.

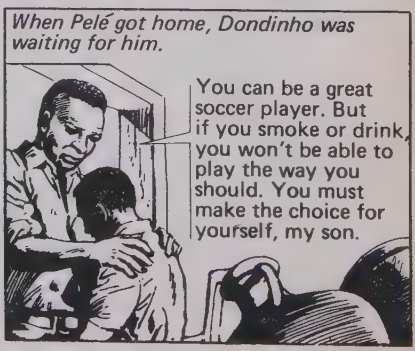

When they walked home after the games, he would teach his son about teamwork.
If you try to be a big hero every time, you will lose points for your team. You should have passed the ball to Roberto on the last play.

Also, you need to know the game so well that you can make the right move without thinking. That's what makes great players.

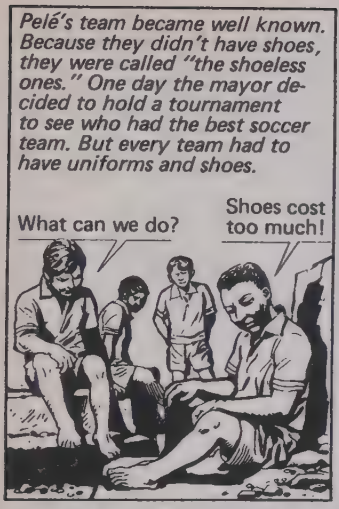

And there were other lessons, too—maybe even more important ones.
Here, Pelé. Try one!

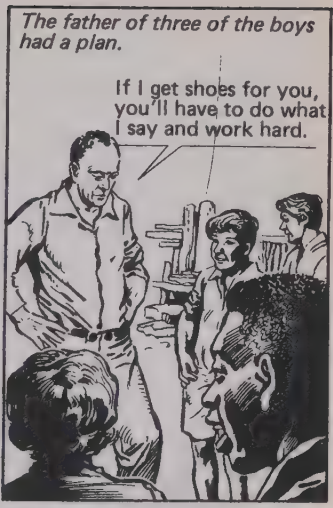
At that moment, Dondinho walked by.

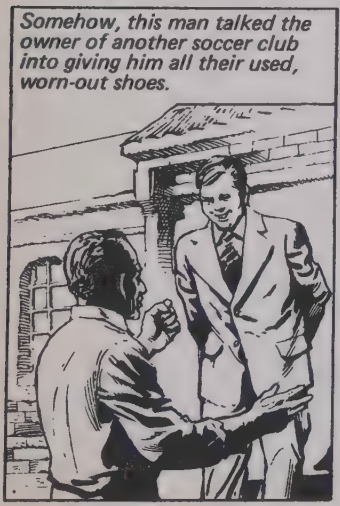
I'm in big trouble now!


When Pelé got home, Dondinho was waiting for him.
You can be a great soccer player. But if you smoke or drink, you won't be able to play the way you should. You must make the choice for yourself, my son.

Shoes and a Real Coach


Pelé's team became well known. Because they didn't have shoes, they were called "the shoeless ones." One day the mayor decided to hold a tournament to see who had the best soccer team. But every team had to have uniforms and shoes.
What can we do?
Shoes cost too much!

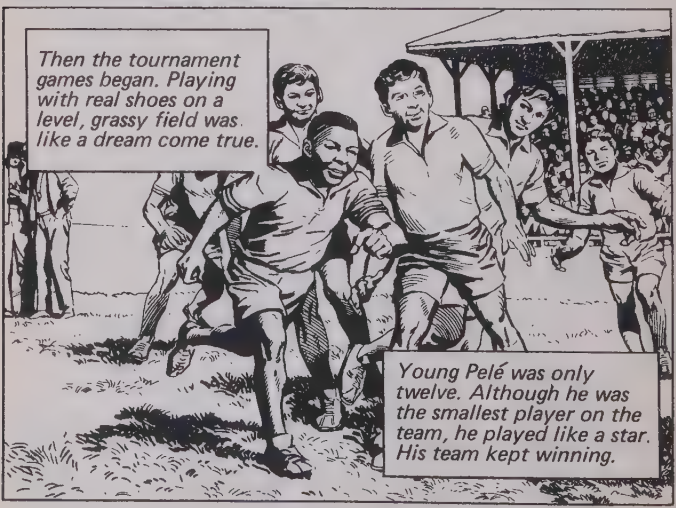

The father of three of the boys had a plan.
If I get shoes for you, you'll have to do what I say and work hard.


Somehow, this man talked the owner of another soccer club into giving him all their used, worn-out shoes.

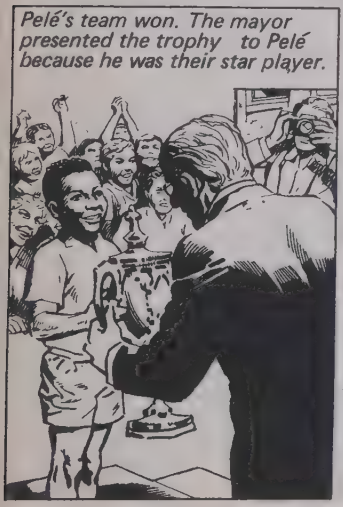
The boys were happy. They didn't care that the shoes did not fit them well.

Ze Leite became the team's manager. He trained the boys well.

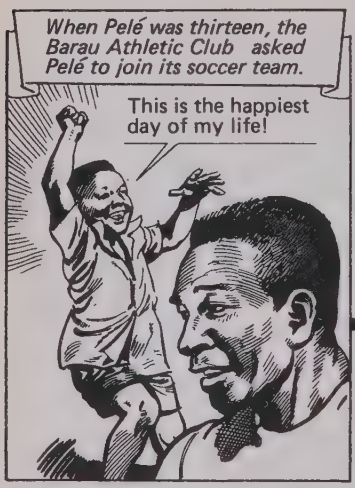
He helped them become better soccer players.

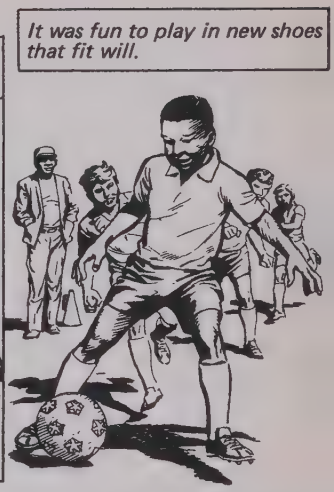

Then the tournament games began. Playing with real shoes on a level, grassy field was like a dream come true.
Young Pelé was only twelve. Although he was the smallest player on the team, he played like a star. His team kept winning.

The last game was played in a real stadium. A crowd of over 5,000 people watched it.

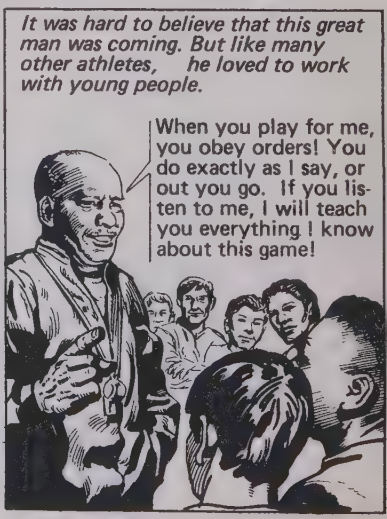

Pelé's team won. The mayor presented the trophy to Pelé because he was their star player.

Later, a proud father hugged his son.
You played beautifully, my son! And your team played well together.


When Pelé was thirteen, the Barau Athletic Club asked Pelé to join its soccer team.
This is the happiest day of my life!


It was fun to play in new shoes that fit will.

And one day there was great news!
Boys, Valdemar de Brito, the well-known soccer player, is coming to be your coach!


It was hard to believe that this great man was coming. But like many other athletes, he loved to work with young people.
When you play for me, you obey orders! You do exactly as I say, or out you go. If you listen to me, I will teach you everything I know about this game!

Years before, Valdemar had coached a team that became a state champion. Dondinho was one of the players on that team.

Remember every word he says. You are very lucky to get this chance.

For hours they practiced.

True to his word, Valdemar taught them every secret he knew.

When they finally played their first game, everyone was surprised at how good they were.

These boys are better than the professionals!

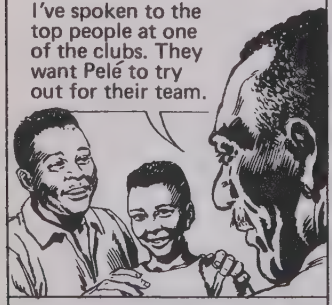
Soon after this they won the championship. Valdemar spoke to the team.

You have learned your lessons well! I must go now to work with others.

The boys were sad to lose him, but they were still a very good team.

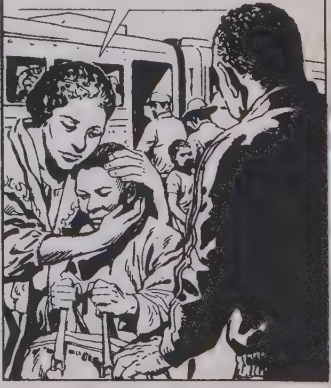
Then about a year later, Valdemar came back to visit Dondinho. Pelé was fifteen years old.

I've spoken to the top people at one of the clubs. They want Pelé to try out for their team.

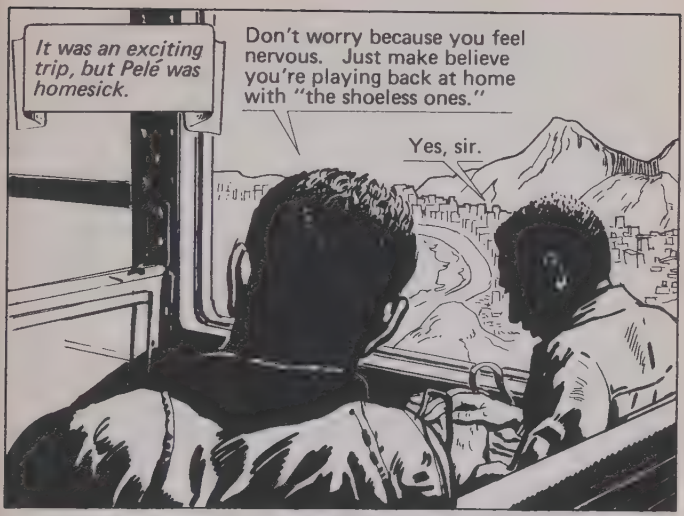


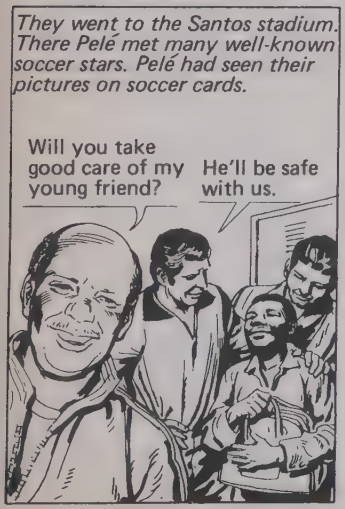
Dona Celeste was against it, but she finally agreed to let Pelé go to join the Santos team.

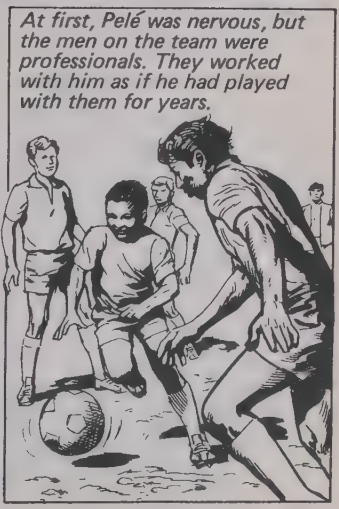
To me you're still a baby. I don't want you to get hurt like your father. I don't want you to suffer for the rest of your life because of soccer.

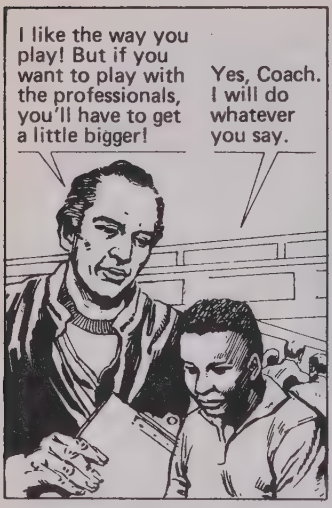


Professional Soccer


It was an exciting trip, but Pelé was homesick.
Don't worry because you feel nervous. Just make believe you're playing back at home with "the shoeless ones."
Yes, sir.

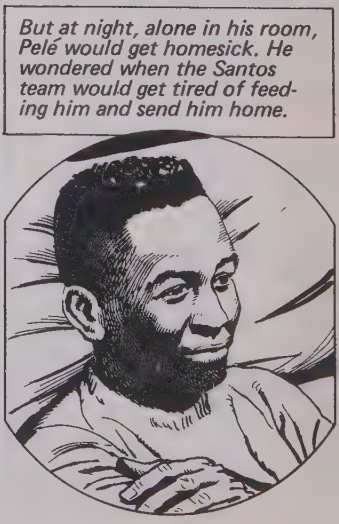

They went to the Santos stadium. There Pelé met many well-known soccer stars. Pelé had seen their pictures on soccer cards.
Will you take good care of my young friend?
He'll be safe with us.

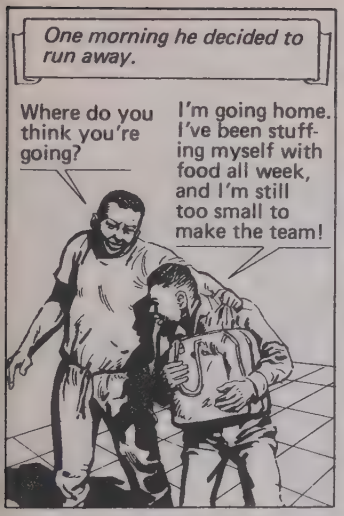

At first, Pelé was nervous, but the men on the team were professionals. They worked with him as if he had played with them for years.


I like the way you play! But if you want to play with the professionals, you'll have to get a little bigger!
Yes, Coach. I will do whatever you say.

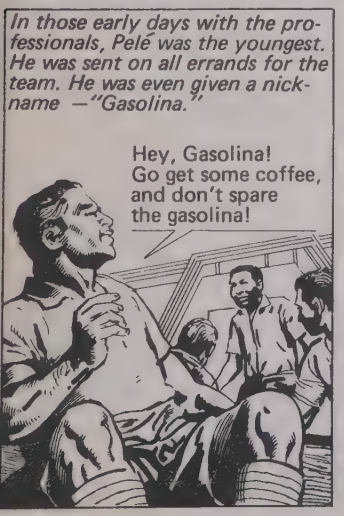
Coach Lula just said I'm too small and light to play with the professionals.
Don't worry, we'll feed you night and day. You'll grow bigger.

The team fed Pelé all day long. They fed him with high protein foods to make him grow.


But at night, alone in his room, Pelé would get homesick. He wondered when the Santos team would get tired of feeding him and send him home.


One morning he decided to run away.
Where do you think you're going?
I'm going home. I've been stuffing myself with food all week, and I'm still too small to make the team!

Just keep eating. You'll soon be the fattest man in Santos. Now stop being foolish, and go put your things away.


In those early days with the professionals, Pelé was the youngest. He was sent on all errands for the team. He was even given a nickname —"Gasolina."
Hey, Gasolina! Go get some coffee, and don't spare the gasolina!

Soon the nickname stuck.
Thanks, Gasolina!

Finally one day Pelé got his chance to play in a professional game.

I'll still run errands, but from now on, don't call me *Gasolina.* Call me *Pelé!*

During the next year, Pelé took turns with the other center forward, Del Vecchio.

At the end of the season, Pelé had scored more goals than anyone else in the state of São Paulo.

One day when he was home on a visit, he heard wonderful news over the radio.

The following players have been chosen for the Brazilian Championship Soccer team: Djalma Santos . . . Mazzola . . . Pelé . . .

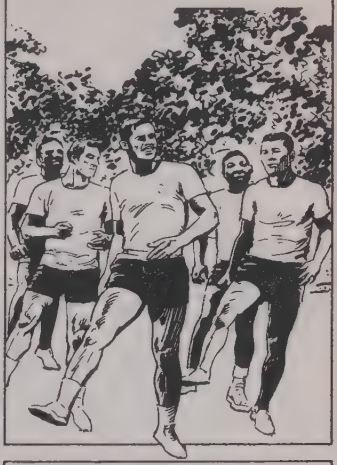
The Championship Games

Pelé had played only one year as a professional. He could hardly believe the news.

Mother! I've been invited to play with the Brazilian Championship Soccer Team!

Good for you, son.

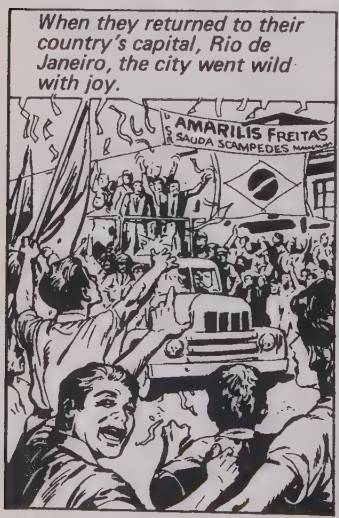
Every man chosen was a top player.



After months of training and playing games, the team flew to Europe.

For several weeks they played teams from many countries. One of the first teams they played was from Sweden.

Seconds before the end of the game, Pelé made a wonderful play. He scored the final goal. Brazil had won the world championship for the first time!


When they returned to their country's capital, Rio de Janeiro, the city went wild with joy.
AMARILIS FREITAS
SAUDA SCAMPEDES

The same wonderful greeting was repeated in São Paulo and in Santos. But the greatest joy came for young Pelé when he returned home.
I missed you, Pelé!
I missed you, too, Mama!

But soon he was back playing soccer again with the Santos team.
10
5

Few people travel as much as a successful soccer team.
This is fun, Pelé! First Peru, then Ecuador, then Colombia, and now Mexico!

By this time, everyone had heard of Pelé.

The team traveled to Europe. They won all the games they played. The fans loved them!
Pelé! Pelé!

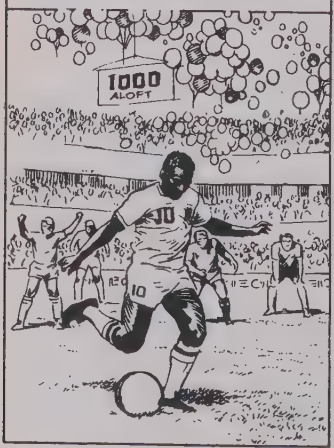
The World Cup games are played every four years.

With Pelé's help, Brazil won again in 1962. Pelé was twenty-two years old.

But 1966 was a sad year for Brazil. They were beaten in the early rounds of the World Cup. The games were very rough, and Pelé was hurt.

He said he would keep playing soccer, but he would never again play in the World Cup.

In 1969, he did something no one else had done before.



He became the first player ever to score 1,000 goals. Pelé was so happy that he kissed the ball

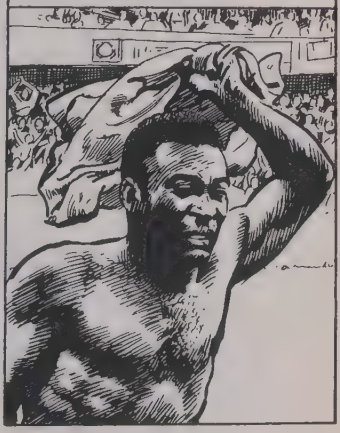
Then, before the 1970 World Cup games in Mexico, Pelé decided to play once again with the Brazilian team.

Brazil became the only country to win the World Cup three times. The team was led by its twenty-nine-year-old star, Pelé.

Pelé was now the most famous soccer player in the world!

But being a great star left him very little time to spend with his family.

So on October 2, 1974, Pelé played for the last time with the Santos team.

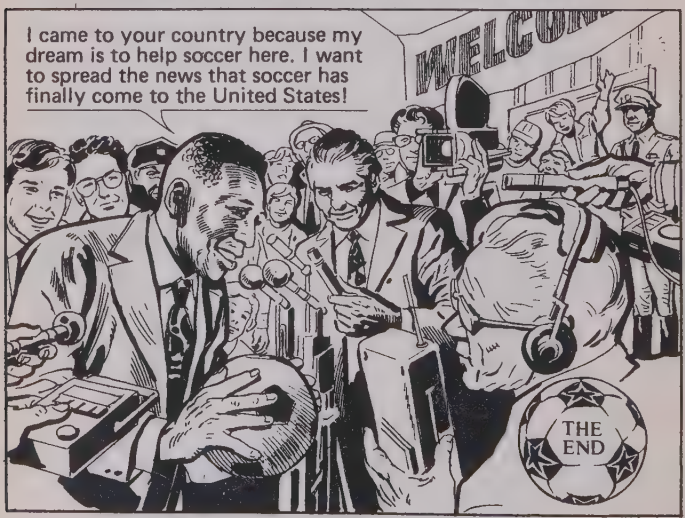


Later, when he was offered four million dollars, Pelé came to the U.S. to play for the Cosmos, a professional team in New York.

You have won the hearts of people all over the world.

Wherever Pelé played, the stadium was filled. But his greatest work was teaching children the game he loved.

I came to your country because my dream is to help soccer here. I want to spread the news that soccer has finally come to the United States!



Do you remember?

Pelé was born:

a. in Mexico.
b. in a small village in Brazil.
c. in Texas.

Pelé's father taught him many things about soccer, and also how to:

a. fight back.
b. be a star.
c. be a good member of the team.

Because he was the smallest member of the Santos team, Pelé had to run errands and was called:

a. Gasolina. b. Pepito. c. Whirlaway.

Pelé won fame in the United States playing with a team called:

a. the Jets. b. the Cosmos. c. the Red Sox.

Quiz Yourself

(Answers at end of section)

Words to know

career	the job a person chooses to do for his life
goals	points scored when the ball is kicked into the other team's net
manager	a person who handles and directs the business affairs of a team or player
practiced	did something over until it was done well
teamwork	working together, especially to reach a common goal

Can you use them?

Using the words above, complete the following sentences.

1. Pelé's father taught him that _____ was important if his team were going to make goals.

2. Almost from the beginning of his _____, Pelé was a star.
3. Pelé _____ kicking the soccer ball with both feet.
4. Pelé was the first soccer player to score over one thousand _____.
5. The new _____ of the team was able to supply his team with shoes and uniforms.

Using pictures

In reading illustrated stories, you will find it helpful to "read" the pictures as well as the words. Look at this picture. It shows Pelé and his friends playing soccer. You can tell that they are poor because they are playing without shoes and because their soccer ball is made of old rags tied together. Look carefully at the other pictures as you read and you will learn more about Pelé's life.

While you are reading

If you had met Pelé when he was a young child, you'd never have expected him to become a great soccer player. While you are reading, make a list of all the things you can find that helped Pelé become a great soccer star.

How well did you read?

When you have finished reading, answer the following questions.

1. Why didn't Pelé's mother want Pelé to become a soccer player?

   (Check the correct *answers.*)

   _____ a. She wanted him to go to college.

   _____ b. She didn't think he would make enough money.

   _____ c. She didn't like the way the fans treated soccer players.

   _____ d. She was afraid that Pelé would never have time to visit her.

   _____ e. She didn't want him to get hurt.

2. One reason that Pelé's father, Dondinho, never became a great soccer player was that:

   (Check the correct answer.)

   _____ a. his wife did not want him to play soccer.

   _____ b. he wanted to work in the clinic.

   _____ c. he was too poor to get good coaching.

   _____ d. he had hurt his knee when he was young, and it always caused him pain.

3. Why did Pelé decide to run away from the Santos team?
(Check the correct answer.)

_____ a. He was homesick.

_____ b. He didn't like the other players.

_____ c. The practices were too rough.

_____ d. He never got to play.

4. In order to play with professional soccer players, Pelé had to:
(Check the correct answer.)

_____ a. put on weight and become bigger.

_____ b. buy his own shoes.

_____ c. learn to control his anger.

_____ d. run errands for his teammates.

5. After only one year as a professional, Pelé was chosen to:

(Check the correct answer.)

_____ a. play soccer in the Olympics in 1960.

_____ b. play with the Brazilian Championship Soccer Team in the World Cup Games.

_____ c. come to America and play with the New York Cosmos.

_____ d. become the coach of Brazilian college teams.

Using what you've read

Pelé's life was so interesting that when he played soccer in the United States, many radio and TV sportscasters spoke to him on their shows. Write a short speech that a radio sportscaster might have used to introduce Pelé to his audience. Remember that some people may never have heard of Pelé. What would you want to tell them?

ANSWER KEY

PELÉ

Can you use them?

1. teamwork
2. career
3. practiced
4. goals
5. manager

How well did you read?

1. b, e
2. d
3. a
4. a
5. b

NOTES

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B16 Albert Einstein
B17 Thomas Edison
B18 Alexander Graham Bell
B19 Vince Lombardi
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B21 Babe Ruth
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B23 Jim Thorpe
B24 Althea Gibson

Pelé

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